



Department of Justice

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16 Charged with Concealing Service in Bosnian Serb Military to Successfully Enter the United States as Refugees

WASHINGTON— Sixteen individuals in six states have been charged with criminal violations in connection with their efforts to obtain refugee status in the United States by concealing their prior service in the Bosnian Serb military, Deputy Attorney General Paul J. McNulty and Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Julie L. Myers announced today.

According to indictments and criminal complaints filed in the Middle District of Florida, the Eastern District of Wisconsin, the Middle District of North Carolina, the District of Colorado, the Eastern District of Michigan, and Northern District of Ohio, the defendants previously served in the Bosnian Serb military. One of the defendants, Nedjo Ikonc, 40, is described in a federal affidavit in Wisconsin as having been a commander of a police unit that cooperated with other Bosnian Serb entities in the July 1995 massacre of Muslims in Srebrenica.

According to the court documents, the defendants allegedly committed immigration fraud and/or made false statements by concealing their prior service in these Bosnian Serb military units when filing immigration applications with the U.S. government. Through these fraudulent applications, the defendants were able to gain refugee status allowing them to enter and reside in the United States. One of the defendants was ultimately able to gain U.S. citizenship.

During the past week, special agents from ICE arrested 13 of the defendants in Orlando, St. Petersburg (Fla), Raleigh, High Point (NC), Milwaukee, Detroit, Cleveland, and Denver. The remaining criminal defendants are at large. All but one of the defendants face criminal charges that include immigration fraud and/or making false statements. The maximum sentence for making false statements is five years in prison, while the maximum sentence for immigration fraud is 10 years imprisonment. One defendant has been charged with unlawful procurement of citizenship, which carries a maximum potential sentence of 10 years imprisonment.

"These cases demonstrate our resolve to identify and prosecute those who enter this country under false pretenses, especially those who hide their military past," said Deputy Attorney General Paul J. McNulty.

"Since it was founded, the United States has attracted refugees escaping from persecution and atrocities in their countries of origin," said ICE Assistant Secretary Myers. "ICE will not allow the United States to be a safe haven for those who failed to disclose their service in military forces that were known to commit atrocities. We will continue to work closely with our international partners to relentlessly pursue such criminals."

These cases were investigated by special agents from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with assistance from the Office of Special Investigations (OSI) of the Justice Department's Criminal Division.

These cases are being prosecuted by the U.S. Attorney's Offices for the Middle District of Florida; Eastern District of Wisconsin; Middle District of North Carolina; District of Colorado; Eastern District of Michigan; and Northern District of Ohio. The Office of Special Investigations is participating in the prosecution of the U.S. citizen defendant in Tampa.

The indictments and criminal complaints filed in these cases contain mere allegations. The defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty.

The defendants are as follows:

Middle District of Florida

- Sekula Bilic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud and one count of making false statements.
- Zdravko Kordic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud.
- Branko Popic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud and one count of making false statements.
- Ostoja Saric, indicted on one count of immigration fraud and one count of making false statements.
- Strahinja Krsmanovic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud.
- Boro Stojanovic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud.
- Jadranko Gostic, indicted on one count of unlawful procurement of citizenship and one count of making false statements.
- Zoran Radic, indicted on one count of immigration fraud and making false statements. Radic remains at large.
- Dusan Bosnjak, indicted on one count of immigration fraud and making false statements. Bosnjak remains at large.
- Bogdan Panic, indicted on one count of naturalization fraud and making false statements. Panic remains at large.

Eastern District of Wisconsin

- Nedjo Ikonc, charged with one count of immigration fraud.

Middle District of North Carolina

- Milivoje Jankovic, indicted on two counts of immigration fraud and two counts of making false statements.
- Veselin Vidacak, indicted on two counts of immigration fraud and two counts of making false statements.

District of Colorado

- Milisav Vukovic, charged with one count of false statements.

Eastern District of Michigan

- Nedjo Lojpur, indicted on two counts of immigration fraud.

Northern District of Ohio

- Ratko Maslenjak, charged with one count of immigration fraud.

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